Containment or Liberation, an Inquiry into the Aims of United States Foreign Policy. by James Burnham; Beyond Containment. by William Henry Chamberlin; Liberation, The Threat and the Challenge of Power. by William S. Culbertson
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Editor: GEORGE J. STANSFIELD

REVIEWS

Containment or Liberation, an Inquiry into the Aims of United States Foreign Policy. By James Burnham. (New York, John Day Company, 1953, Pp. 256, $3.50.) ***Beyond Containment.*** By William Henry Chamberlin. (Chicago, Henry Regnery, 1954, Pp. 406, $5.00.) ***Liberation, The Threat and the Challenge of Power.*** By William S. Culbertson. (Atlanta, Tupper and Love, 1953, Pp. 208, $3.50.)

On the basis of different approaches and experiences, these three books present the argument that the mere containment of Soviet expansionism, while preferable to appeasement of, or surrender to, the communist threat, falls far short of a satisfactory American security policy. To leave the Soviet orbit with its 800 million inhabitants and its immense natural resources undisturbed, may be to allow the communists to build up, in the long run, strength superior to that of the United States; at best, it is to acquiesce in the emergence of a dangerous imbalance of power. To permit the communists to keep free-born nations and individuals in servitude, is to violate the basic tenets of American political morality. To assume that a strong and resolute American policy would "provoke" the Soviets into a world war and, accordingly, to argue consistently for weak-kneed American concessions, is to misunderstand Soviet action principles.

The security of the U.S. and the free world requires that, ultimately, the Soviet regime be disestablished and that the peoples presently under the communist yoke be liberated. Unless liberation occurs, the United States probably will be forced to fight a cataclysmic war for survival. Until liberation takes place, the United States will be compelled to live under a continual threat of atomic war. The risks of a liberation policy do include the risk of military conflict, but such a conflict is neither likely nor would it have to be fought under necessarily unfavorable conditions for the United States. On balance, the risks of liberation are seen to be smaller than the risks of containment. For containment does nothing to stem the onrushing development of Soviet super-weapons.

The critics of Messrs. Burnham, Chamberlin and Culbertson have argued: (a) That a liberation policy is just a milder version of preventive war strategy; and (b) that these authors have not indicated a way by which liberation can be brought about. However, before we can argue profitably about methods, we must be clear about the objective. Once the objective has been accepted—as it may have been in President Eisenhower's speech of April 16, 1953—it can be pursued in different fashions and according to various time tables. A cursory analysis of the present world situation does not indicate, by itself, the feasibility or infeasibility of the liberation concept. Any strategy requires suitable opportunities, but if the objective has not been defined, the opportunities may slip by unused, as has happened all too often in the past.

The highest goal of a liberation policy is indeed to make preventive war unnnecessary although, naturally, no one can be sure that in a crisis like the one which besets our world, war can be avoided altogether. Colonel Culbertson shows, in his subtle argument, that internal American policies have a considerable bearing on the practicality of liberation. Messrs. Burnham and Chamberlin indicate how, if we had been committed to liberation in the past, some of our key decisions would have been different, with the result that the growth of the Soviet Leviathan might have been thwarted. All three authors recognize that a concept of liberation cannot be spelled out in the abstract. Nor was

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the concept of containment ever defined, or otherwise translated into a set of understandable, concrete and workable propositions. The partisans of containment have yet to explain what they propose to do in order to halt or balance the rapid growth of the Soviet power machine, or how they want to preserve democracy against a perpetuated and increasing atomic threat. Possibly there are answers to these questions; but they have not been given. By contrast, the concept of liberation has logic and reality on its side; although it may not be comforting to the hopefuls and the fearfuls.

Liberation simply means that each concrete policy decision would aim at reducing and ultimately eliminating Soviet power rather than granting it its inviolate zone of influence. A statesman working for liberation would not hesitate to permit the "hot pursuit" of hostile aircraft. He would quote back to Molotov, as Mr. Dulles did at Berlin, the former's pro-nazi utterances of 1939-40. And he might take a strong attitude concerning the American prisoners-of-war not yet returned from communist captivity. But he doesn't need to argue for preventive war.

If we think of the Monroe Doctrine, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, the independence of Panama, the two world wars and American attitudes on "colonialism," liberation can be described as the classical concept of American foreign policy. Liberation would be a reasonable objective even if it were impossible at this time, to present a concrete plan for the termination of the Soviet threat. Continued world tensions may force the U.S. into adopting the liberation objective in any event. Liberation is a long-range undertaking which must be pursued step-by-step just as a policy of international cooperation, which does not lend itself to implementation by one grandiose strategic concept, must be executed in practical decisions. In this domain of political strategy, blueprints are of little use, but Napoleon's wise dictum is fully applicable: *"On s'engage, et puis on voit."*

Colonel Culbertson views liberation as just such a practical though complex working philosophy—the danger, as he sees it, is in failing to recognize that we no longer can espouse the moral foundations of our way of life without also embracing liberation. We cannot turn our backs on a world that is half slave and hope to retain our own freedom. Such an attitude does not necessarily entail global war. Colonel Culbertson would keep his powder dry first and foremost, but he also visualizes a step-by-step use of all our vast strengths—moral, economic, political, spiritual and legal—in a gradual and controlled manner. Nor is he wanting for means to employ these strengths: trade, dollar power, education, cultural intercourse, technology, nuclear energy—all these and many more would be used to improve the lot of underdeveloped peoples, to promote industrial expansion and to counter the threat of communism at home and abroad. In this respect Colonel Culbertson must qualify as one of that small but distinguished group who anticipated President Eisenhower's atomic peacefare program.

Today, the vast resources of the free world await but the statement of such an objective in order to assume the offensive. What is needed is a psychological tour de force which can place world communism on the defensive—and no ideological-dictatorial system can survive long when on the defensive.

In essence, the question is whether the free world and the United States, without undue risk to their way of life, can afford the continued survival and the continuing growth of communist military power and whether the United States should accept the permanence of the Soviet regime. A second question is whether the United States should tie its security to the hope of a spontaneous and evolutionary improvement of the Soviet system or rather take action to bring about desirable changes. These questions are so basic that it will not do to ignore them and to disparage the bold authors who put them before the American public. Granted, Messrs. Burnham, Chamberlin and Culbertson do not know all the answers. But do the apostles of containment? I strongly recommend that these books be read with an open mind.

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A Hundred Years of War. By Cyril Falls. (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1953. New York: Macmillan, 1954. Pp. 419. $6.00.)

Cyril Falls has undertaken the supremely difficult task of surveying the military aspects of war from 1850 to 1950, and he has done it with superb skill. Probably no other military historian could have presented the characteristics, strategy, tactics, weapons and administration of the wars of these hundred years with such clarity and authority.

The book will meet the need of military men for a concise account and a reasoned interpretation of the variety and change which have characterized modern warfare. But it is to be doubted whether it will fulfill the author's purpose of giving to the educated public a military history

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